Within a week following the public meeting, MoDOT had met with more than 100 members of the community. District staff promised to review the design, re-examine traffic counts and accident statistics and consider alternatives that would require less additional right of way.

At first it seemed that both the residents and MoDOT officials were going in circles. Residents feared a wider state highway would encourage speeders, heavy trucks and commercial traffic through a residential neighborhood that serves children walking and riding buses to nearby schools. MoDOT officials struggled to find a design that could accommodate all highway traffic at volumes projected for the next 20 years.

Aided by a consultant, MoDOT found a solution that didn't leave both sides feeling they were boxed into a corner.

The new design relies on roundabouts – a solution that will allow three lanes of traffic to accommodate more capacity while improving safety at busy intersections. Trucks, buses and fire equipment can maneuver through roundabouts, but the slow speeds required in the intersection discourage commercial truck traffic. In addition to being safer for pedestrians, a roundabout's design allows a three-lane highway to move a greater volume of traffic more quickly than other intersections.

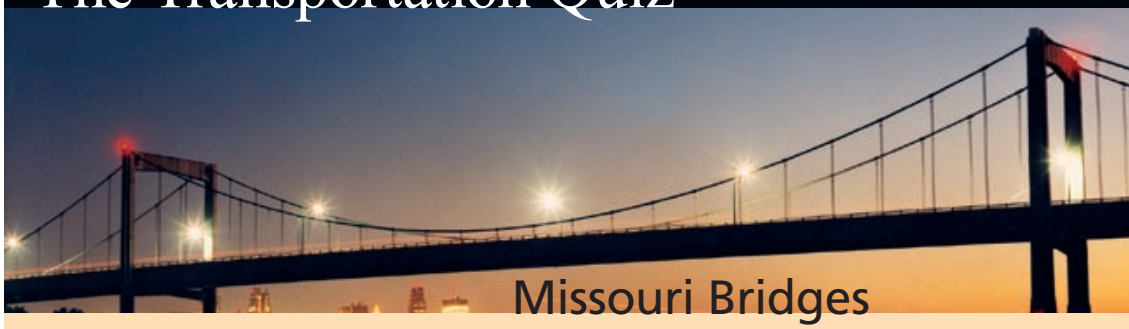
The roundabouts – and MoDOT – received a round of applause from concerned Belton residents during a July 2001 meeting, and the design received strong community support at another public meeting in September 2001. Belton residents liked the design features that addressed their concerns.

District staff has met several more times with an ad hoc group of adjacent property owners to keep them updated, address specific issues and squelch rumors regarding the project. Construction on the roundabouts – including a fourth roundabout added to the design at the community's request – is scheduled to begin this fall.

Steve Porter is an outreach specialist in MoDOT's Kansas City Area District.

In The Mode
The Transportation Quiz

By Melissa Black



Missouri Bridges

Missouri has more major bridges than any other state. They cross rivers, creeks, gullies and roadways helping you get safely from point A to point B. You might even drive over or under one of these structures on a regular basis without even thinking about it.

Test your knowledge of Missouri bridges.

1. How many bridges does Missouri have?

a. 100
b. 1,600
c. 3,000
d. 23,700

2. How many major river bridges does Missouri have?

a. 10
b. 22
c. 55
d. 123

3. How often are Missouri's major river bridges inspected?

a. Every year
b. Every other year
c. Every 5 years
d. Every 10 years

4. What is the average age of Missouri bridges?

a. 10 years
b. 25 years
c. 45 years
d. 100 years

5. How long is the longest bridge in Missouri?

a. 3,250 feet
b. 5,120 feet
c. 6,824 feet
d. 7,847 feet

6. What is the age of the oldest bridge in Missouri?

a. 129 years
b. 93 years
c. 87 years
d. 65 years

7. How wide is the narrowest bridge in Missouri?

a. 9 feet
b. 35 feet
c. 56 feet
d. 87 feet

8. How much does it cost to build a typical major river bridge?

a. $6 million
b. $13 million
c. $7 million
d. $100 million

9. How much does it cost to build a minor bridge?

a. $50,000
b. $1 million
c. $500,000
d. $750,000

10. How much does MoDOT invest in bridges annually?

a. $5 million
b. $125 million
c. $200 million
d. $225 million

Answers: 1 – d; 2 – c; - 3 – b; 4 – c; 5 – d; 6 – a; 7 – a; 8 – c; 9 – b; 10 - d.

Melissa Black is operations outreach coordinator at MoDOT General Headquarters.